1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
SIKKIM AK3

declaration that they will not pass the frontiers of Tibet, Bhutan or Nepal; those who break this obligation are liable to imprisonment and punishment if caught.

As far as I can see the State of Sikkim is well and paternally administered; the extremely precipitous nature of the whole country has rendered road-building extremely difficult; but the main mule roads into Tibet are kept up in a good state, and solid bridges have been built on these roads. Sikkim has few natural resources except for some small copper mines in the south and (as far as I could tell, undeveloped) large quantities of mica-bearing stone in the north. Sikkim is strategically important as being on the main road between Tibet and India, and nearly all the trade between the two countries passes through it. The Political Officer, assisted by trade agents inside the Tibetan frontier, overlooks this traffic; he also advises the Maharajah on questions of policy.

Since the middle of the last century Sikkim has been free from war and the fear of war, and its history has been as uneventful and as happy as the poorness of the country allows. The only diversion of a military nature in which Sikkim has been involved was the Younghusband expedition to Lhassa in 1905–06 in which several Sikkimese and Lepchas took part. In recent years there has been so great an immigration of Nepalis into Sikkim that it is probable that in the southern part of the country these invaders outnumber the original inhabitants; laws have been passed prohibiting their settling to the north of certain fixed points, but it is not certain to what extent these laws are enforced.

The pacification of the whole country through the British protectorate has given the Lepchas general security; besides abolishing slave-raiding it has also put an end to the mild peonage which formerly existed among the Lepchas themselves. One day in Lingthem the lama Jiroong, when he was rather drunk, embarked on a widely applauded panegyric of the beneficial influence of the British, and of their confirmation in power of the Maharajah. Before the English came, he said, we Lepchas were harried by Tibetans and Nepali and could not settle anywhere for fear we should be sold as slaves; now we have our homes and can cultivate our crops.

Jiroong himself is the descendant of former slaves. Some generations ago his ancestor, then a small boy, was kidnapped by Bhutanese; but the boy was rescued by the then head of the village

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●567 —Serving's father—and brought up as his peon. Such Lepcha slaves were either the children of slaves, orphans, or the children of very poor parents. A man would bring up such children and they in turn had to serve him all their lives. If the owner got a child on a female slave the child would be treated as his own, and, if a boy, would inherit, though a smaller portion than the legitimate sons. Slaves could only marry slaves, but otherwise were not distinguished by any special treatment; they received religious attention like ordinary people, and could not be sold or transferred. As in all other cases of emotional relationship among the Lepchas, there was no fixed or expected attitude between masters and slaves; if the master was kind, he was loved like a father. There was a fixed limit to the number of slaves one person could own.

A modification of this situation continues today. If there are children with nobody to look after them, as occasionally occurs, the head of the village, the Mandal, will take them into his household. When they are young they work for the Mandal like a servant, but when they grow up the Mandal arranges a marriage for them and they are then independent; there is at no time any coercion.

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177 In some respects the Lepchas are in a different state to most groups hitherto described by anthropologists. A few studies have been made of tribes who have only had contact with other tribes in a similar state of development, but far and away the greater number had already been more or less seriously influenced by Occidental culture, either through colonisation, missionaries, or traders. Sometimes this external modification is taken into account, sometimes practically ignored; in either case the extent and direction of European influence is easily calculable and understandable. The Lepchas on the other hand have not been in any way directly exposed to European colonisation or missionary influence. Except for an occasional tourist to Talung monastery, and the passage of a couple of mountaineering expeditions attempting to climb Kinchenjunga, Europeans have not entered Zongu. A few of the men had seen Europeans prior to our arrival through trading expeditions to Gangtok and Darjeeling, but practically none of the women; they considered us 'amazing,' particularly on account of the colour of our skins and the shape of our noses.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

future father-in-law, the parties being often united before the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste, and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the father's country. All the labours of the house, the field, and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves if they have them.

Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.